



Testimony of ConnCAN

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed FY23 Budget Adjustments

February 17, 2022

Testimony on the Governor's Proposed FY23 Budget Adjustments: Education

Co-Chairs Senator Osten and Representative Walker, and other distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Subira Gordon and I am Executive Director of ConnCAN. Thank you for all the work you do on behalf of Connecticut students. Under your leadership, we've had engaging and meaningful conversations about how to fund students based on their needs, how to reduce the racial and economic disparity gaps, how to develop a diverse educator workforce, and how to create innovative schools that fill critical needs in our urban centers.

Often, we hear that education is the great equalizer. It has the potential to break cycles of generational poverty, provide social mobility, and help individuals achieve their full potential. Education is a prerequisite to achieve the American dream. It is the backbone of our future.

Yet, in Connecticut, it feels like we're living in a paradox. We are highly ranked in education, yet we have the largest opportunity gaps in the country. We provide some of our children with limitless opportunities, while other students do not have the resources they need to read on grade level. As our student population has rapidly diversified, we have continued to struggle diversifying our educator workforce. We celebrate innovation, but we have yet to fund an innovative charter school in Danbury; one that has received significant local support.

We are at a crossroads, and this budget guides which direction we choose. We can either continue the status quo, which is what this proposed budget adjustment represents, or choose a new path. A path that:

1. Funds all public school students based on their individual needs, as outlined by last year's SB948;
2. Make substantial investments in scholarships, rental assistance, loan forgiveness, signing bonuses for teacher candidates of color to join the educator workforce; and
3. Fund the Danbury charter school to increase innovation, reduce overcrowding, and provide an option for families.

This path is in the direction of justice, equity and opportunity. We know that investments in education yield better student outcomes, especially when paired with strong school and district improvement supports. So, let's take the new path.

Our kids, educators, families and state will thank us for being bold.

We stand with you to make these key investments, and look forward to seeing real action this year and in subsequent years.

Thank you.

About ConnCAN

Founded in 2005, ConnCAN is leading an advocacy movement to ensure that all kids in The Constitution State have access to a high-quality education, regardless of their address.

Our work to improve education in Connecticut springs from our belief in the immense potential found within every child and our responsibility as citizen advocates to do everything we can to ensure we have an education system that lives up to this potential.

We strive to be resourceful and nimble as we advance the changes our kids deserve. We aim to see every win—and every setback—as an opportunity to learn what’s working today and envision what might be possible tomorrow. We know we don’t have all the answers and that we can only succeed by constantly testing our assumptions, working in close collaboration with others and investing in an inclusive culture enlivened by diverse viewpoints from across our state.